



Media Contact:
Devan Willemssen
Office: (410) 260-7539
Cell: (443) 694-3651

Martin O'Malley
Governor
Abigail Ross Hopper
Acting Director

60 West Street, Suite 300
Annapolis, MD 21401
1-800-72-ENERGY
energy.maryland.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARYLAND ENERGY ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES COLLABORATE TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S MARINE HABITATS AND PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY

*Maryland Energy Administration and Department of Natural Resources begin environmental research
necessary to develop offshore wind energy*

Annapolis, Maryland (September 28, 2012) — The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to partner on environmental surveys necessary for the development of offshore wind energy. Using funds acquired from the 2011 merger settlement of Exelon and Constellation Energy, this partnership will allow DNR to expand its coastal and ocean survey work. By conducting targeted environmental surveys in Maryland's Wind Energy Area, that part of the Outer Continental Shelf adjacent to Maryland's coast, MEA and DNR will reduce the environmental and financial uncertainties associated with the deployment of offshore wind energy. The agencies see this effort as an opportunity to protect Maryland's critical environmental resources while ultimately lowering the overall costs of offshore wind projects off the coast of Maryland.

"An offshore wind farm off Maryland's coast will bring numerous benefits to the State, including homegrown clean energy, sustainable jobs, reduced public health costs, lowered greenhouse gas emissions and significant progress towards meeting our renewable energy portfolio standard," said Abigail Ross Hopper, MEA's Acting Director. "The environmental surveys are the next step forward in order to ensure that offshore wind energy generation comes to Maryland."

The MEA-administered Maryland Offshore Wind Development Fund will be used for marine meteorological, oceanographic, and ecological resource assessment, as well as targeted investments to support Maryland's burgeoning offshore wind economy. MEA and DNR have developed a strategy to analyze essential data on benthic habitat, marine mammals, sea turtles, and fish and avian populations. This data will be necessary for developers of offshore wind farms to receive federal approval to build on the Outer Continental Shelf adjacent to Maryland's coast. In combination with activities like MEA's proposed [High Resolution Geophysical Survey](#), these investments will benefit Marylanders by reducing the costs and increasing the scale of offshore wind energy while protecting Maryland's precious natural resources.

"An understanding of ocean habitats and marine life is fundamental to protecting our natural resources and wisely developing offshore wind energy," said DNR Secretary John Griffin. "This new research will further our understanding of these marine habitats and communities and will provide the information needed for future environmental reviews and decision-making."

Since 2009, MEA and DNR have worked closely on planning for offshore wind development. Staff from both agencies collaborated to analyze existing natural resources data and acquire new data to help understand and avoid potential impacts on the proposed development area off the coast of Ocean City. With extensive stakeholder input, the agencies created an online interactive map of the wind area, the [Maryland Coastal Atlas](#).

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The mission of the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) is to promote affordable, reliable, clean energy. MEA's programs and policies help lower energy bills, fuel the creation of green collar jobs, address environmental and climate impacts, and promote energy independence.